

Northeast Ohio Sierra Club
March & April '13 Newsletter

Upcoming Events:

➔22nd Annual Demonstration and Conference to Support the Indigenous People

Monday, April 8, Progressive Field

The demonstration will take place at Progressive Field before the opening day Cleveland Baseball Franchise game and the conference will probably take place at a local United Church of Christ Church after the demonstration. For more information call Ferne at 216-252-1622 or Dennis at 216-939-8229.

➔Cleveland International Film Festival

April 3-14, at Tower City Cinemas.

NEO Sierra Club will sponsor *Rebels With a Cause* at the upcoming Cleveland International Film Festival. This documentary details the establishment of the Point Reyes National Seashore on the California coast and provides a wonderful insider's look at what grassroots organizing can do to protect important natural resources.

➔Tree Planting With the Caring Cubs (children's program)

Saturday, April 20 at 10 AM, Rocky River Nature Center

Cleveland Metroparks and NEO Sierra Club have teamed up with Caring Cubs, a volunteer group for small children, to celebrate Earth Day by planting trees in the Metroparks! **Registration is REQUIRED.** Please visit the Caring Cubs (caringcubs.com) site for more info and to register.

➔EarthFest 2013

Sunday, April 21 from 10 AM - 5 PM, Cuyahoga County Fairgrounds

Join Earth Day Coalition for EarthFest 2013 at this year's new location, the Cuyahoga County Fairgrounds. In partnership with the Sustainable Cleveland 2019 initiative, we will be celebrating Advanced and Renewable Energy. Presented and organized by Earth Day Coalition since 1990 and now in its 24 year, EarthFest is Ohio's largest environmental education event and the longest running Earth Day celebration in the nation. Please visit the Earth Day Coalition site for more info.

Greetings Northeast Ohio Sierra Club

I am Steve McPhee, your newly elected executive committee chair. I am honored by the opportunity to serve our group and hope I can help all of us enjoy, explore, and protect the planet.

First, a bit about my Sierra Club experiences. I joined back in the late 1980's, looking for like-minded people to hike and camp with. I found many, including my wife, Christine. I found out about Inner City Outings in the NEO Sierra Club newsletter and Christine and I both became certified leaders. I continue to help ICO as the treasurer, and occasionally an assistant leader on outings. I have also held every other office for Cleveland ICO. A love of the outdoors and nature is what guides me and keeps me engaged in Sierra Club. I have heard this from many of the members of Sierra Club and Inner City Outings I have met. More recently I have joined the NEO Executive Committee, first as the ICO representative, then as an elected member. This is my third year on the ExCom and I am impressed with the expertise, commitment, and pride all of my colleagues bring. I hope that my leadership can help all of us succeed in our Sierra Club activism, events, and outings.

I will be communicating mainly with the ExCom, committee chairs, and the Ohio Chapter leadership and employees on a regular basis. I hope they will be tolerant of my learning what so many long time activists do without effort. To those of you just getting involved, maybe this is your first foray into our web site, newsletter, or e-mails, or social media postings. Welcome. I stand ready to help you find your niche in our group, as do the rest of the ExCom and committee chairs. Please reply, call, or come to a meeting or event.

What I have learned in my long ICO leadership tenure and my recent ExCom experience is that NEO Sierra club is what we make it. Northeast Ohio is "that place" many others hear of in the news and figure maybe their environment is not so bad by comparison. They also hear about the great improvements happening here and are inspired. I am sure that many of the Sierra Club members I know are responsible for that. Engaging in the smallest task for our environment added to the actions of our colleagues makes a huge difference. In just three years I have seen the sale of a state park for fracking stopped, coal-fired power plants retiring nearly a decade ahead of schedule, a wind turbine installed at the fairgrounds (Come to Earth Fest Sunday, April 21 and see!), and over 100 Water Sentinels trained to monitor stream water quality all across Ohio. Overall, Sierra Club is a force for a better environment and our tasks and actions are all important.

I look forward serving with all of you in 2013. Please keep in touch and keep engaged.

Steve McPhee

Chair, Northeast Ohio Sierra Club

Steve.NEOSierra@gmail.com, (440) 891-0714

Our New Urban Agriculture Committee

By Pat McKenna

Our new Urban Agriculture committee, formed this year as a result of the wonderful presentation by **Kim Foreman** from **Environmental Health Watch** at our retreat in January, is off to a good start. Through Kim's presentation on diversity, we were introduced to an organization called **Rid All Green Partnership**. Since the retreat, Kim and I have discussed different ways that our Sierra Group could partner with Rid All along with other related youth groups in the area and we decided to form the Urban Agriculture committee. Kim is putting together a tour of the Rid All agriculture farm for a couple of us as I write this article.

Please join Randy Moyer, Erin Jacubec, Andi Whitaker, and myself on the Urban Agriculture committee. We'd love to have a few more people working with us on the Rid All farm and with youth teams throughout the area on empowering our underserved community to bring **healthy foods** to their tables and to fight the **environmental justice** fight.

Please join us for a night about Social Justice with several speakers, then join us the following evening for a film screening of **Soul Food Junkies**. See the attached file for more information, then register for this free event at Case Western Reserve University.

If you like working with kids and don't mind getting your hands dirty, join the committee. Contact me at 440.525.4845 or via email at mckenna-p@sbcglobal.net.

Membership Committee

By Pat McKenna

I'm excited to be our new **Membership Committee Chair** and look forward to working with a few of you on welcoming newcomers, talking to outgoing members, and increasing membership in our group. I'd like to form a committee and get started as soon as possible, so here's my pitch:

If you...

- Are a social person with an outgoing personality
- Like talking to people
- Have the desire to become active in our group
- Believe in the Sierra Club's mission

Contact me at 440-525-4845 or mckenna-p@sbcglobal.net

Let's have coffee, take a look at our membership history, and discuss ideas about outreach.

Forward on Climate

By Randy Cunningham, Captain of the Cleveland bus

The February 17th **Forward on Climate Rally** in Washington, DC is now being chewed on and digested by its friends, foes and pundits who are judging its significance in the long, discouraging story of how the US has both dealt with and refused to deal with climate change. I was part of the Ohio contingent that sponsored three buses from the Sierra Club. We joined many other Buckeyes in DC who risked hypothermia to demand that Obama match his lofty rhetoric about dealing with climate change with real action on the issue – starting by turning down the **Keystone XL pipeline project**.

It is hard to underestimate the significance of the Keystone XL pipeline project as a mobilizing focus for the broader movement to deal with climate change. Until Keystone, climate change was a difficult issue to get hold of for North American activists. That is, until the issue of the Keystone XL pipeline gained people's attention. The project is a poster child for a fossil fuel industry gone berserk. The pipeline would carry **tar sand oil** from northern Alberta to the Gulf Coast for refining. Tar sand oil is not only a source of **carbon pollution**, the process that prepares it for refining uses breathtaking amounts of water, and energy to put it into a form where it can be shipped and refined. And god help you if it leaks – which all pipelines do – because unrefined tar sand oil is highly caustic. No one knows how to clean it up. Finally, tar sands mining has been a holocaust for the northern Alberta environment and the First Nations of Canada unlucky enough to be in its way. Finally, it is a project where the buck stops with President Obama. He alone has final say. In short, no more excuses about Congressional deadlock. Which is why when **Bill McKibben** of **350.org** organized the first series of civil disobedience events in front of the White House in August 2011, he helped unlock a door which the rest of the climate movement has walked on through.

The main sponsors of the event provided their own unique resources. There was the entrepreneurial imagination of **350.org**, the institutional heft and muscle of the **Sierra Club**, and the cultural appeal and civil rights era spirit of the **Hip Hop Caucus**. No one organization in the coalition could have pulled it off. Together they helped organize a demonstration that will be seen as the historic launching pad for a real climate movement in the US.

February 17th was large. It was colorful. It was another step in building a movement that is racially and ethnically diverse. It was inspiring. It was fun and, most important of all, it was young. As it should be since today's youth are the ones who are in the crosshairs of climate change. No one else could have been a better master of ceremonies than **Rev. Lennox Yearwood** of the Hip Hop Caucus who spoke the cultural language of the young audience and got the crowd dancing and enthused for the march. **Van Jones** blew the doors off the White House when he said that the climate credibility and future legacy of President Obama depended on what he decides to do with the Keystone decision. **Michael Brune** of the Sierra Club

exemplified the new activist focus he has brought to the organization. **Senator Sheldon Whitehouse** of Rhode Island and **Maria Cardona** of Latinovations broke down the practical politics of what is ahead. There was also a significant presence of First Nations from all of North America, led by **Chief Jacqueline Thomas** of the Saik'us First Nation and **Crystal Lamona** of the Beaver Lake Cree Nation who is right in the middle of tar sands mining. Finally, gathered under our funny looking state flag, were the assorted delegations from Ohio who ably represented the Buckeye state.

Then the march began at our insistence, since we were cold and wanted to move. The march was a river with many different political eddies, from hyper militant socialists, to the representatives of staid and mainstream advocacy. But that is what a movement looks like! That is what makes a movement vital and let's say it fun! We marched from the Washington Monument to the White House and back to vigorous chants and a mobile First Nation drum that gave the march its rhythm. Well, let me say that we oldsters marched, the youth more or less bounced down the street. Fantastic!

Thanks to **Rashay Layman** and **Brian Kunkemoeller** from the state office, who showed their skills at juggling numerous often-conflicting tasks while herding cats, **Pat McKenna** who saved our butts on the parking issue, and the rest of the Sierra Club crew from Cleveland – **Akshai, Anne, Gabriela, Dave** and many others who made this demonstration such a success.

Idle No More: Indigenous Uprising Sweeps North America and Northeast Ohio

By Dennis Michael Plank, Human Rights & Environment Committee Chair

What is happening in Canada about human rights and the environment? **Idle No More** in Canada has organized the largest mass mobilization of Indigenous People in recent history. Why is this important? It is spreading around the world and it will be coming to Cleveland, Ohio.

Recently Canada has carried out many human rights and environmental abuses against the **Indigenous People of Canada** and finally there was a straw that broke the back of the camel. There are many abuses so I will try to list some of them: One, there was abuse on December 14th when the administration of **Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper** rammed through **Bill C-45, changing the Indian Act** to remove environmental and human rights protections. Two, there was abuse when no consultation about the bill took place. Three, there was abuse when the environmental assessment of lakes and rivers was removed. Four, there was abuse when **resource extraction without protection** was increased (this includes the toxic tar sands mining).

Then Prime Minister Harper refused to meet with **Theresa Spence** who is **Chief of the Attawapiskat Nation**. Out of desperation, Chief Spence carried out a hunger strike. The hunger strike sparked protests, flash mobs, letters, rallies, tweets, teach-ins, highway

blockades, train blockades, round dances at shopping malls, etc.

Then the above spread to the rest of Canada. Then it spread to the U.S., Europe, New Zealand, and the Middle East. Now it is coming to Cleveland, Ohio.

The Idle No More mobilization is influencing **The Committee of 500 Years of Dignity and Resistance**, local Indigenous People in Northeast Ohio, and the Sierra Club Northeast Ohio Human Rights and Environment Committee to continue to work on their "**22nd Annual Demonstration and Conference to Support the Indigenous People.**" We are going to continue to protest racism against Indigenous People in the media and in solidarity with the Idle No More mobilization we are going to work on human rights and the environment.

The demonstration will take place at Progressive Field before the opening day Cleveland Baseball Franchise game and the conference will probably take place at a local United Church of Christ Church after the demonstration. The above will take place on April 8, 2013. For more information call Ferne at 216-252-1622 or Dennis at 216-939-8229.

NEO Sierra Club Sponsors Film

By Michael Melampy

NEO Sierra Club will sponsor [Rebels With a Cause](#) at the upcoming **Cleveland International Film Festival** (CIFF) to be held at Tower City Cinemas, Tower City Center, April 3-14, 2013.

This documentary details the establishment of the **Point Reyes National Seashore** on the California coast and provides a wonderful insider's look at what grassroots organizing (including Sierra Club involvement) can do to protect important natural resources. Someone from the Club will address the audiences at the screenings of Rebels and Sierra Club literature will be distributed.

An additional bonus for Sierra Club members will be a discount code that enables you to receive a **\$2 per ticket discount for all CIFF films**. The code will be available later this month; check the NEO Sierra Club webpage. CIFF also features other environmental films. Descriptions of the films and a schedule of their screenings will soon be available at the [CIFF website](#) as well as in print program guides. Please plan to attend CIFF and help us use CIFF as a venue for promoting environmental protection.

Energy and Activism at the NEOSC Retreat

By Andi Whitaker, Newsletter Editor

This January, I was happy to spend a cold, dreary day staying warm inside the Garfield Heights Nature Center, surrounded by an amazing group of leaders and activists at the Northeast Ohio Sierra Club Annual Retreat. NEOSC is the only group in the Ohio Chapter to hold an annual

retreat. This is a testament to the activism in our area: the devotion of personal time, the dedication of mental and emotional resources, and the absence of discouragement..

To kick off the retreat, **Randy Cunningham** led an invigorating discussion on revitalising the club. We considered what drives and inspires an activist, as well as the barriers to activism. Treasurer **Grace Ciptak** also spoke on the importance of fundraising within the group and **Michael Melampy** updated us on the Cleveland International Film Festival.

Our guest speaker was **Kim Foreman, Associate Director of Environmental Health Watch**. For those unfamiliar with EHW, this organization “has helped policy-makers and the public in Northeast Ohio address the critical health concerns related to our urban and industrial environment.” Kim’s presentation on Creating a More Diverse Club sparked a conversation about community gardens and urban agriculture which led to the development of a new conservation committee: the **Urban Agriculture Committee!** (Please see Pat’s article on the Urban Ag Committee for more information and how you can join.)

Ohio Sierra Club’s Conservation Coordinator, Amanda Keith, spoke on water issues in Northeast Ohio. Our Group’s new **Water Chairperson, Jessica Ferrato**, helped Amanda explain the Club’s **Water Sentinel Program**, which trains volunteers on monitoring water quality at specified area checkpoints.

The Annual Retreat was a fantastic opportunity for learning how NEOSC runs and finding ways to become more involved. But you don’t have to wait until next January to get active within the Group! If there is a conservation issue that you’re passionate about, check out our website and contact the appropriate committee chairperson! And join us on Facebook to keep abreast of all of our events and outings, as well as pertinent environmental news.

I look forward to the growing involvement in our group and want to extend gratitude to all who attended the retreat. Thank you for your time and dedication. Our rewards are the positive changes in policy and practice and the resulting improvement of our health and environment. Many thanks to:

Kathleen Bradley, Anne Caruso, Grace Ciptak, Carole Clement, Randy Cunningham, Jessica Ferrato, Irene Fiala, PhD., Kim Foreman, Loren Gorden, Jane Halbedel, Audrey Hopkins, Gerald Horning, Justine Jarubas, Amanda Keith, Judith Majher, Pat McKenna, Don McPherson, Michael Melampy, Randy Moyer, Linda New, Dennis Plank, Dave Simons, Kathy Smith, Andi Whitaker, Jubilee Zenisek

Committee Meetings:

Executive Committee & Conservation Committee

This meeting includes sub-committees such as Wetlands, Human Rights, Population. We meet

at Fairview Public Library, 21255 Lorain Rd, Conference Room C. All are welcome to attend.
For the Conservation Committee, call **Dennis Plank** at (216) 939-8229.
For the Executive Committee, contact **Steve McPhee** (fixitsteve@gmail.com).

Upcoming ExComm & Conservation Committee Meetings:

Wednesday, March 6, 7 – 9 pm

Wednesday, April 3, 7 – 9 pm

Wednesday, May 1, 7 – 9 pm

Wednesday, June 5, 7 – 9 pm

~

Coal & Energy Committee

Please contact **Randy Cunningham** at (216) 631-3337 for the time and date of the next meeting. We meet at 4105 Stilmore Rd, South Euclid, Ohio 44121.

~

Rainforest Committee

The Rainforest Committee typically meets every month on the **third Sunday** of the month. Call Michael Melampy at (440) 826-2263 for time and place.